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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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09/751,809

12/29/2000

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36968/198826

5336

7590
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01/24/2008

EXAMINER

BROWN, RUEBEN M

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2623

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

01/24/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/751,809

Applicant(s)

DURDEN ET AL.

Examiner

Reuben M. Brown

Art Unit

2623

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 October 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 6-9, 19 and 20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 & 19-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 10/26/2007 has been entered.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 6-9 and 19-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Oko, (U.S. Pat # 6,947,966), in view of Cowan, (U.S. PG-PUB 2001/0027564 A1) and further in view of Ming, (U.S. Pat # 5,710,815) & Palmer, (U.S. Pat # 5,195,135).

Considering claims 6 & 9, method for formulating programming content, the system comprising;

‘releasing a plot via a website’, is met by Oko, col. 4, lines 49-55; col. 6, lines 45-60, which discusses that poll questions may be presented (col. 3, lines 32-40) to viewers to decide on the outcome of a program, or how the program should proceed, (i.e., plot) via several different types of networks 76, such as the Internet (col. 6, lines 45-60).

‘receiving user votes via the website’, again Oko teaches the Internet (col. 4, lines 49-54; col. 6, lines 45-60; col. 7, lines 49-56) is one of the networks that may be used to interact with the poll questions.

‘embedding alternative plots into channels’, Oko discusses that the system is enabled to access modified content, but does not discuss that the modified content may be found on different channels. Nevertheless, Cowan discusses a headend that provides substitute programming on a plurality of channels, Fig. 1; Para [0023]- [0025]. ‘Sending an instruction to switch to an alternate channel for a particular plot’, reads on the combination of Oko & Cowan. Specifically, Cowan teaches a base band switch 127 that responds to control signals from controller 135 to selectively connect inputs 192 and 193 to the outputs of the switch, Para [0027]-[0029]. It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, to modify Oko with the feature of placing substitute content on a plurality of channels and switching to at least one of the substitute programming at the headend, at least for the benefit of avoiding the resistance & costs of individually addressed arrangement, as disclosed by Cowan, Para [0006].

‘tabulating the votes and sending instruction for particular alternative plot’ reads on the activity of the network server 56 in Oko, which receives, records and tallies the votes of a plurality of viewers, with respect to particular poll questions, see col. 5, lines 1-25; col. 6, lines 10-30 & col. 8, lines 1-15. Oko teaches that the vote is provided to the network provider that tallies the vote and provides the vote results 20 to the content provider, which subsequently modifies the content, col. 8, lines 5-12. Thus the content provider sending the tally results to the network provider reads on ‘sending an instruction’.

It is pointed out that Cowan is particularly compatible with Oko, since the channel switch in Cowan is also based on the determination of a third party. For instance, when a market researcher determines that a signal should be substituted for a normal signal, the controller sends the switch signal to the switching device, [0023], [0029]-[0030].

As for the additionally claimed feature of, 'receiving a batch of program data associated with a program', 'scanning the batch of program data to determine how much of the program data will be blocked', 'when an amount of blocked program data exceeds a threshold, then blocking the entire program', Oko does not discuss the specifics of the recitation. Nevertheless Ming, which is in the same field of endeavor, provides a teaching of a CATV provider service embedding a plurality of category content codes within a program for delivery to a subscriber, col. 7, lines 21-55; col. 8, lines 1-25. Upon delivery, the category content codes are decoded by the receiver and used to determine whether they exceed a threshold criteria set by the subscriber. The receiver will then block either the entire program or only segment/portions of the program, based on the criteria set, col. 8, lines 51-64; col. 10, lines 12-26; col. 19, lines 35-57. It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, to modify Oko with the feature of receiving program content data and blocking programming based on the data, for the desirable improvement of providing the subscriber with a way to control the viewing of programs with particular offensive content, on their screen, as taught by Ming, col. 1, lines 55-67 thru col. 2, lines 1-42.

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As for the specifics of, 'receiving control data comprising instructions to alter a display screen at coordinates specified by the control data', Ming only discusses blocking a screen or frame, and does not explicitly state that coordinates within a display screen may be blocked. Nevertheless Palmer, which is in the same field of endeavor discloses a blocking technique that may obscure a frame in its entirety of only segments of eth screen, based on the offensive material to be shown in the screen, Abstract; col. 5, lines 1-42 & col. 6, lines 1-32. It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, to modify the combination of Oko & Ming with the feature of blocking only portion of a screen, i.e., using specific coordinates, at least for the desirable advantage of minimizing the necessary intrusion, when parts of scene/frame may be OK to be viewed, as taught by Palmer, col. 3, lines 54-68 thru col. 2, lines 1-8.

Regarding claim 9, the claimed feature of 'particular alternative plot' corresponds with 'particular alternative plot', as recited in claim 6, and is likewise treated. The claimed system for formulating alternate programming, comprises means that corresponds directly with subject matter mentioned above in the rejection of claim 6, and is likewise treated.

Considering claims 7-8 & 19-20, sending the instructions to the transmission facility, such that the instruction is automatically sent based on the tabulated votes reads on (col. 5, lines 1-55; col. 6, lines 1-25), which teaches that the content provider(s) sends the tally results to the network provider(s), which reads on the 'instruction'. As pointed out above, 'the instruction to switch to an alternate channel', is met by the disclosure of Cowan, Para [0028], [0038]-[0039].

Regarding claims 8 & 20, 'linking the website to the transmission facility', reads on scenario of users answering a poll question via the Internet, and the results being sent to the transmission facility, which is taught by Oko, col. 4, lines 48-55; col. 6, lines 45-60. It is noted that linking does not recite any particular limitations such as using HTML or over PSTN, etc.

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

A) Shioya Teaches blocking access to programming based on program ratings.

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Any response to this action should be mailed to:

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P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450
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or faxed to:

(571) 273-8300, (for formal communications intended for entry)

Or:

(571) 273-7290 (for informal or draft communications, please label
"PROPOSED" or "DRAFT")

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Reuben M. Brown M. Brown whose telephone number is (571) 272-7290. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F(8:30-6:00), First Friday off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Christopher Kelley can be reached on (571) 272-7331. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300 for regular communications and After Final communications.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Reuben M. Brown

Reuben Brown
REUBEN M. BROWN
PATENT EXAMINER